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## NOTES AND NEWS

### REPORTS OF SECTION MEETINGS OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA,

#### 1. CENTRAL DIVISION, MADISON, WIS., DEC. 28, 1917

##### A. ROMANCE SECTION

The chief place on the program of the Romance Section was given to problems of First Year French, Italian, and Spanish in college. The committees appointed in 1916 to present outlines of first year courses in those subjects made reports, which were accepted and ordered published in THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL as being the organ which would give them the widest publicity. Since the readers of THE JOURNAL will be able to read these recommendations *in extenso*, it is not necessary to summarize them here.

Suffice it to say that the question of a standard pronunciation for use in Spanish classes, which had been tabled in 1916 pending further investigation, was considered and decided in favor of Castilian. On a motion of Professor McKenzie of Illinois, the Secretary was directed to announce this by telegraph to the Secretary of the Eastern division,

Ten minute discussions of second year college work then followed. Professor Bush of Iowa treated the topic for French, Miss Phelps of Minnesota for Italian, and Professor Owen of Kansas for Spanish. It was suggested that these papers might provide a basis for the program of 1918, which would result in syllabi for second year courses in the three languages, but the section preferred to leave the new program committee free to choose, without being hampered by instructions.

On a motion of Professor Smith of Wisconsin a resolution was passed calling attention to the very real danger in the fields of French and Spanish due to the shift of poorly prepared and unsympathetic teachers from other branches, and expressing the section's strong disapproval of such changes being allowed by administrative officers in colleges and secondary schools. Following this, a motion was carried, appointing a committee of five, consisting

of Professors Smith of Wisconsin, McKenzie of Illinois, Olmsted of Minnesota, and two others to be named by them, whose duty it shall be to call to the attention of state and local authorities the existence of this danger, to give them counsel as to how it may be avoided, and to consider how the supply of competent teachers of Romance subjects may be speedily increased.

When the topic of Military French was reached, the Section voted that the officers of the Central Division shall communicate with those of the Eastern Division, with a view to securing harmony and vigor of action in regard to the steps to be taken on this important matter. It seemed to be the feeling that most attempts at teaching French to our troops up to the present time have been unsatisfactory, largely due to the fact that no control exists over regularity of attendance, and the wish was expressed that the status of this instruction might be so fixed as to give it a real place on the daily program of the men who, by volunteering for classes, show their desire to learn as much French as possible.

When this matter had been disposed of, the section adjourned after a session lasting more than three hours.

The chairman of the meeting and of the program for 1918 is Professor H. R. Brush of North Dakota; the Secretary, Professor C. E. Leavenworth of Wabash College.

A. COLEMAN.

The University of Chicago.

## B. GERMAN SECTION

The session was devoted to the reading and discussion of two interesting papers, the first, "Elementary Language Training as Art Training", read by Prof. Walter R. Myers, of the University of Minnesota. Mr. Myers said, in substance: "Language training is primarily art training, that is, training in skill in handling the language tool, as opposed to scientific knowledge about language. Greater emphasis should therefore be laid upon the expression of thoughts from the beginning, even to the exclusion, in the first weeks, of all scientific information about the language, until the beginner has, through the necessarily close observation and imitation, formed the habit of associating immediately in his subconsciousness the idea and the expression for the idea. Imita-

tion and practice, being the essentials in all art training, are supported by criticism (grammar) after a basis of skill has been developed. The application of these principles influences fundamentally the selection of reading material, the methods of preparing assignments, and of conducting recitations, as well as the methods of study and the volitional attitude of the student."

This point of view, ably presented by Mr. Myers, and warmly and vigorously endorsed by his Minnesota colleagues, was shown by Mr. Hohlfeld to be nothing less than a return to the "natural method" of the Berlitz school, which, however, was anything but a haphazard agglomeration of disjointed sentences, but was based on a carefully graded grammar scheme. The discussion centred, as so often before, about the direct method principle, showing wide variation of idea and belief. Mr. Deihl, pointing out that the high school is supposed to prepare the pupil for the conscious, rational learning processes that characterize university work, deprecated the proposal to go back to first principles; and rather striking personal testimony was offered by a graduate student who had attempted to learn German from a teacher who knew no grammar whatever—pure direct method. The attempt was a failure until he procured himself a grammar and found out why he was expected to speak thus and so.

The second paper, offering "Practical Suggestions on the Methodology of Undergraduate Literary Courses", was read by Professor John L. Kind, of the University of Wisconsin. Remarking that much attention has been devoted to the organization of elementary courses, and even to advanced courses in literature, but little or none to the courses in between, the speaker proceeded to outline in considerable detail the practice now in force at the University of Wisconsin, as a result of numerous conferences on the part of the entire German department.

The courses in question correspond roughly to junior and senior college work, and are divided into Groups A and B. Courses in Group B are designed primarily for language practice, involving much conversation and writing in German, close and careful preparation of the text, and the like. Courses in Group A, on the other hand, are primarily for literature-practice, stressing interpretation of the text on broader lines, cultural, social, political, and biographical background, and thus preparing the student

for the literary courses of a more advanced character. Students entering the university with two years of German normally take an elementary course in their freshman year, a Group B course in their sophomore year, one or more Group A courses in their junior year, and are then ready for very advanced work. Another advantage resulting from such a graded sequence is that students who have progressed regularly through it are capable of acquitting themselves creditably in advanced courses conducted wholly in German.

B. Q. MORGAN.

University of Wisconsin.

2. EASTERN DIVISION, NEW HAVEN, CONN., DEC. 28, 1917

A. ROMANCE SECTION

Chairman—Professor James Geddes, Jr., of Boston University.

In welcoming those present to the first meeting of the Romance Language Section of the Eastern Division, Professor Geddes drew attention to the live character of the subjects to be presented and announced that before each paper he would read the brief abstract that usually accompanied such paper in the Association's announcement. It would rest with the Section whether such gatherings should be continued in the future or not.

Dr. Richard Thayer Holbrook of D. C. Heath & Co. then gave a talk on "Modern Manuscripts". He had two motives in discussing the subject: 1) the good it might do the would-be author, and 2) the probably selfish one of a desire to save himself trouble with poorly prepared manuscripts. The usual manuals to direct the preparation of a manuscript were unhappily not studied by authors; he illustrated by several manuscripts which through disregard of fundamental considerations or through a desire to save paper would cost many dollars for re-editing on the part of the publishers or for proof corrections. He ended by suggesting to professors the advisability of a course on the editing of manuscripts, for only in the doing of types of work such as biographies, notes, vocabularies would the difficulties be overcome and the usual blunders be avoided.

Professor Charles A. Downer of the College of the City of New York then followed with an inspiring paper on "Teaching

American Soldiers a Little French." He described his own experiences with New York recruits, their enthusiasm over difficulties surmounted, his impressions as to the way these difficulties might be overcome, finally, in the eleventh lesson, the conquest of the first stanza and the refrain of the Marseillaise. In three weeks after his course, his little manual was finished.

After this paper Professor Edward C. Armstrong of Princeton University suggested the desirability of a committee to collect and disseminate information regarding Romance Language Teaching and he moved the following resolution:

*Resolved,*

That the incoming President of the Association be directed to appoint an executive committee of five on Romance Language Instruction and the War; the function of said committee being: to co-operate with the proper governmental agencies regarding the instruction of our soldiers in the languages of our Allies; to keep the teachers of Romance informed of the opportunities for useful service; and in general to further in any way within their province the successful prosecution of the war.

That the President of the Association be empowered, after consultation with the chairman of the said executive committee, to appoint an advisory committee of such larger membership as may seem best, to co-operate with the executive committee.

That the Treasurer of the Association be directed to pay from the funds of the Association the necessary clerical and postal expenses of the committee as certified by the chairman, to a sum not exceeding seventy-five dollars.

On presentation of this motion by the Secretary to the general association the following day, the resolution was adopted.

The next paper was to have been read by Professor Ernest Hatch Wilkins of the University of Chicago on "The Study of Italian in the American College." Professor Wilkins was unable to be present, but Professor Geddes read the study which had been forwarded. Facts and statistics were given showing the discouraging lack of interest in the study of Italian throughout the country; various remedies, including that of central committees in Rome and America with exchange professors, were suggested.

Professor Earle B. Babcock of New York University read the next paper on "The Phonetic Society." He showed that the old

antipathy against the use of phonetics in the classroom was passing away; he described the formation in New York City of the Phonetic Society and bespoke for the society a widespread and intelligent interest on the part of the public.

"Why Some of us Teach the Spanish-American Pronunciation" was warmly defended by Professor Frederick Bliss Luquiens of Yale University; this pronunciation differed but little from the Castilian and was more practical considering our relations with the South-American Republics.

Professor E. C. Hills, formerly of Colorado College and now of the Hispanic Society of New York, upheld the Castilian pronunciation; others followed, pleading pedagogical sincerity in the teaching of Spanish.

A delightful session was brought to a close by a paper by Mr. Lawrence A. Wilkins of New York City Schools, on "The Use of Literary Texts in the early Stages of Instruction in Spanish." After announcing the meeting, scheduled to take place the next day in New York, at which it was intended to form an aggressive Spanish Society, he discussed the handicaps the teachers of Spanish had to face and especially in the question of suitable texts to meet the present crisis.

L. H. ALEXANDER.

Columbia University.

#### B. GERMAN SECTION

The German Departmental Meeting of the Modern Language Association was held Friday, December 28, in room 16, Lampson Hall, Yale University. The meeting was called to order at 2:40 P. M. by the Chairman, Professor Robert Herndon Fife, Jr. About eighty members of the Association were present.

The exercises began with an address on "The Study of Literature in Undergraduate Courses" by Professor Camille von Klenze. The speaker stated the purpose and plan of the Departmental Conference and outlined the questions and problems presented in the subject chosen for discussion this year. At the conclusion of his paper the discussion of special topics was opened by Professor Marshall Blakemore Evans, who treated "The Arrangement of Reading Matter in Intermediate and Advanced Courses with a View to Literary Development." Professor Evans recom-

mended the use of a short text containing matter illustrative of German life, at the beginning of the year, to be followed by a short story of significant content, and that, in turn, by a selection from autobiography or history. In the second semester he would devote about three weeks at the beginning to the reading of German lyrics, to be followed by a more difficult prose narrative, such as "Michael Kohlhaas." The grammar work and oral drill of the first semester to be continued, in reduced quantity.

At the close of Professor Evans' paper the Chairman appointed a Committee on Nominations consisting of Professor E. H. Mensel, Chairman, Professor Marian P. Whitney, and Dr. F. W. C. Lieder, to report later in the meeting.

The second topic of discussion, "The Presentation of Classical Literature," was treated by Professor Karl Detlev Jessen. He emphasized the necessity of providing a proper historical and philosophical background for the study of the German classics. He was followed by Professor Frederick W. J. Heuser, who discussed "The Presentation of Nineteenth Century Literature." The speaker emphasized the necessity of first-hand study of the writers and of original sources of information, as preferable to the study of biography and criticism at second-hand. He also emphasized the value of essay work in the development of the student's interest and scholarly method. The fourth topic, "Synoptic Courses in the History of German Literature," was presented by Professor Albert Bernhardt Faust, who urged the importance of liberal first-hand reading of author's work parallel with the lectures. Such reading he believed, should consist in part at least of complete works.

Following the presentation of the special topics assigned in the program came general discussion of the respective papers, and related questions. This discussion was opened by Professor Jessen, who recommended the intensive study of little rather than the superficial reading of much. Professor C. B. Wilson spoke of his success in teaching German lyrics with the aid of comparative work in French and English lyrics. Professor Brown, of Haverford, described a somewhat similar method. Professor von Klenze raised the question of how far the foreign language might be used in advanced literary courses. Professor Heuser expressed the opinion that the student could use it either in speaking or in



writing to a very limited extent, if he is to produce anything worth while in the way of literary interpretation. The instructor, however, could use it to a considerable degree, varying with the qualifications of the respective classes. Professor Whitney urged that the instructor should speak German exclusively and the students be required to do so as far as possible. The training of the student's ear is essential and he will acquire facility in a reasonably short time. Professor Herbert Z. Kip recommended practice in memorizing prose and verse passages, such as the rôles of plays being studied in the course.

Dr. C. A. Krause urged the necessity of standardization in foreign language teaching particularly with reference to constituting a syllabus or 'Lesekanon'. He stated the three points which he considered as *one*: What aims have you in view; *two*: What should be the method of procedure; *three*: What should be the content or body of the work?

The Committee on Nominations reported the nomination of Professor Daniel B. Shumway, of the University of Pennsylvania, as Chairman, and of Professor Herbert Z. Kip, of the Connecticut College for Women, as Secretary, for the ensuing year. On motion one ballot was cast and Professors Shumway and Kip were declared elected.

The meeting then considered the question as to whether the sectional meeting next year should be devoted to pedagogical or technical topics. Professor Fay, of Tufts College, expressed his approval of this year's program and recommended that a pedagogical subject be selected for discussion next year; also, that the question of whether technical papers should be presented, be determined by the Chairman and Secretary of the German section in conference with the Chairman and Secretary of the General Association. Professor Faust recommended that an additional departmental session be held for the presentation of the more technical papers, and offered a resolution to this effect, which was seconded by Professor Evans. It was accordingly

*Resolved*, That the German Section of the Modern Language Association favors an additional departmental meeting for the presentation of technical papers other than pedagogical.

On motion the meeting adjourned at 5:30.

WM. ADDISON HERVEY.

Columbia University.